

2009 Tasmanian Population Health Survey: Highlights

This document brings together some of the important findings regarding key health and lifestyle behaviours as published in the *2009 Tasmanian Population Health Survey: Selected Findings* report.

The Tasmanian Population Health Survey was conducted as a telephone survey from November to December 2009. During this time, 6,319 adults throughout Tasmania participated in answering a series of questions on their health and their lifestyles, such as smoking and alcohol consumption.

Note that Tasmanians without access to a landline telephone, such as sole mobile phone users, are not included in this survey, which may have resulted in an under-estimate of smoking prevalence in particular.

Health and Well Being

- Only about one fifth (19.9%) of Tasmanian adults rate their health as fair or poor, but more than two out of five Tasmanian adults (42.6%) rate their health as excellent or very good.
- Just over one tenth (10.9%) of Tasmanian adults experience high levels of psychological distress.
- One quarter of Tasmanian adults have been diagnosed with arthritis (25%), whilst over one fifth of the Tasmanian adult population have been diagnosed with depression/anxiety (21.8%) or asthma (20.6%).

Smoking

- The survey showed that about 1 in 5 Tasmanians 18 years and over smoke either daily or occasionally (19.8%), with over half of all smokers (58%) aged less than 45 years.
- Almost 1 in 4 (22.9%) Tasmanians with the lowest household incomes are smokers compared to only 1 in 7 Tasmanians (14.1%) with the highest household incomes.
- Smokers are less healthy than non smokers. More smokers report poor/fair health (28.3%) than ex-smokers (20.8%) or non smokers (16.4%).
- 1 in 5 Tasmanians who smoke (18.3%) report high levels of psychological distress compared to only 8.4% of non-smokers.
- 1 in 3 Tasmanian smokers (30.5%) have been diagnosed at some point during their lives with depression or anxiety, compared to only 1 in 6 Tasmanians (17.5%) who do not smoke.

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Alcohol

- About 1 in 20 Tasmanians (5.9%) are at higher risk of long-term alcohol related harm. Almost half of those Tasmanians at higher risk were aged between 45 and 64 years (43%).
- Significantly more Tasmanians consuming alcohol at risky levels in the long term live in high income households (19.6%) rather than low income households. (13.1%).
- About 1 in 10 Tasmanians experience high levels of psychological distress. However, the risk is much higher for Tasmanians who consume alcohol at risky levels in the long term – in fact, about one and a half times as likely (16.3% c.f. 10.9%).
- About 1 in 5 Tasmanians rate their health as fair/poor. In Tasmanians who drink alcohol at risky levels in the long term this rises to about 1 in 4. (19.9% c.f. 25.0%)

BMI

- Over half of all Tasmanians reported being overweight or obese (51.9%). Almost 1 in 5 Tasmanians are obese (18.7%), with over 60% of those aged 45 years and over.
- About 1 in 5 Tasmanians living in low income households are obese compared to just under 1 in 7 Tasmanians in high income households (20.7% c.f. 15.4%)
- Tasmanians who are obese experience more psychological distress (13.4%) than Tasmanians who are of normal weight (8.8%)
- Only about 1 in 10 Tasmanians (12.3%) of normal weight rate their health as poor or fair compared to over 1 in 3 Tasmanians who are obese (34.6%).
- 14.3% of obese Tasmanians have diabetes compared to only 6.6% of all Tasmanians.

Physical Activity & Nutrition

- Almost 1 in 3 Tasmanians do not undertake sufficient physical activity to maintain good health (150 minutes per week, which could include walking, household chores, gardening, etc). Most Tasmanians who fail to undertake sufficient physical activity are aged 45 years and over (65%).
- Almost 2 in 5 Tasmanians (36.1%) living in low income households do not undertake sufficient physical activity to maintain good health compared to only about 1 in 5 Tasmanians in high income households (21%)

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- **Tasmanians who undertake sufficient physical activity are healthier. They are less likely to experience high levels of psychological distress (10.1% c.f. 12.0%) or to rate their health as fair/poor than Tasmanians who have inadequate levels of physical activity (16.6% c.f. 26.9%)**
- **About half of all Tasmanians (49.8%) consume the recommended level of fruit (at least 2 pieces daily), and only about 1 in 10 Tasmanians (11%) eat enough vegetables (5 or more serves daily). Vegetable consumption increases with age, as only about 1 in 20 Tasmanians aged 18-24 eat enough vegetables compared to about 1 in 7 Tasmanians aged 65 years and over (6.5% c.f. 14.2%)**
- **Tasmanians who consume recommended levels of vegetables are healthier. They are less likely to experience high levels of psychological distress (7.3% c.f. 11.3%) or to rate their health as fair or poor than Tasmanians who have inadequate vegetable consumption (15.5% c.f. 20.5%).**
- **Tasmanians who consume recommended levels of fruit are healthier. They are less likely to experience high levels of psychological distress (9.3% c.f. 12.4%) or to rate their health as fair or poor than Tasmanians who have inadequate fruit consumption (17.0% c.f. 22.9%).**

Electronic copies of the complete report are available online at
<http://www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/pophealth/epidemiology>

For further details regarding these data please contact Michael Long at
michael.long@dhhs.tas.gov.au

Statistical analysis regarding this survey is ongoing and further results will be published when they become available.